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Chairman: Mr. BOATEN (Ghana)

CONTENTS

- AGENDA ITEM 33: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARMAMENTS RACE AND ITS EXTREMELY ARMFUL EFFECTS ON WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 34: IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3473 (XXX) CONCERNING THE SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL I OF THE TREATY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA (TREATY OF TLATELOLCO): REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 38: INCENDIARY AND OTHER SPECIFIC CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE THE SUBJECT OF PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS OF USE FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 39: CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS: REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 40: URGENT NEED FOR CESSATION OF NUCLEAR AND THERMONUCLEAR TESTS AND CONCLUSION OF A TREATY DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN: REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 41: IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 31/67 CONCERNING THE SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL II OF THE TREATY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA (TREATY OF TLATELOLCO) (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 42: EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DISARMAMENT DECADE (continued)
- (a) REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
- AGENDA ITEM 43: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE DENUCLEARIZATION OF AFRICA (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 44: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST (continued)
- AGENDA ITEM 45: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN SOUTH ASIA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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AGENDA ITEM 46: PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURE OF NEW TYPES OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND NEW SYSTEMS OF SUCH WEAPONS: REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 47: REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 48: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE: REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 49: CONCLUSION OF A TREATY ON THE COMPLETE AND GENERAL PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 51: GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT;
- (b) REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY;
- (c) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 52: SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT: REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 53: WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE: REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (continued)

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45,
46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52 and 53 (continued)

Mr. ZEA (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, it is an especial pleasure for my delegation to congratulate you most warmly on the distinction conferred on you by your election to guide the work of this important Committee during the present session; and likewise to congratulate the other officers of the Committee. It has been an extremely wise election because of the exceptional merits and qualities of all the officers and my delegation expresses its best wishes for the success of the delicate task entrusted to them.

The interesting debate which is taking place at this time on disarmament items, even though on occasion it has pointed to the lack of effect of the United Nations attempts to reduce the arms build-up throughout the world, nevertheless has not been coloured by the deep pessimism which characterized it in the past. This is due no doubt not to any improvement in the terrifying picture presented by the arms build-up, nor to any achievements which may have been registered in the course of last year, but to the fact that we can at last look forward to an event which, it has been predicted, offers the only way of avoiding a catastrophic failure of United Nations activities to contain the arms build-up during its 31 years of existence. This event will be the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament which will begin on 23 May 1978.

Colombia has participated in preparations for this event and we wish to emphasize the interest with which all members of the Committee established for that purpose have been co-operating to convene that session. In this connexion, I am pleased to praise and thank, on behalf of Colombia, the work performed by the Chairman of that Committee, Ambassador Carlos Ortiz de Rozas of Argentina. The preparatory work has indeed been skilfully guided, as can be inferred from the report submitted to the General Assembly. All circumstances have been taken into account and an endeavour has been made to reconcile all factors so that this session, which is of the utmost historic significance, will fulfil the anguished hopes of a world continuously exposed to an imminent catastrophe.

(Mr. Zea, Colombia)

During the meetings of the Preparatory Committee our delegation emphasized the need to give the greatest weight to what is called in the draft agenda for the session "a programme of action". It is obvious from that meeting that concrete and practical measures must emerge that will permit a reduction of nuclear and non-nuclear arsenals, the cutting of military budgets, the elimination of deadly weapons of mass destruction, incendiary, chemical and bacteriological weapons and the achievement of effective control over the transfer of and trade in arms. Nuclear tests in all environments must be prohibited and the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons must be halted, with effective sanctions against those who violate the agreements and rules to be adopted to that end. Unless this programme of action has these results, mankind will once again be disappointed as it has been so many times in this regard since the end of the Second World War.

I am bound to confess that my delegation is somewhat sceptical about the positive results of the special session of the General Assembly scheduled for next year, although we shall continue to co-operate to the greatest possible extent in the work of the Preparatory Committee within the limitations imposed on us by necessity as a developing country with no military capability.

(Mr. Zea, Colombia)

Our concern is that only a rhetorical declaration will come out of that meeting, like the innumerable others produced in the United Nations, and a mountain of documents such as those which accumulate on the subject of disarmament year after year, without producing any practical result thus far. That scepticism is understandable, because while it is true that no human group can be indifferent to the tremendous threat of the arms build-up and all peoples of the earth must co-operate to eliminate it, it is no less obvious, whatever may be said to the contrary, that responsibility lies solely with the highly industrialized countries which manufacture weapons, which traffic in them, which have an advanced technology to make those weapons more deadly and more cruel, and which often promote conflict in order to expand the market for their deadly and macabre merchandise.

Several delegations have referred to priorities in regard to disarmament, in view of the approach of the special session to be held next year. Of course the primary concern is nuclear disarmament. Once nuclear arsenals with their incalculable destructive power are eliminated, there would at least remain a hope for the survival of mankind on the planet, and of civilization. This is what justifies all the efforts of the international community to achieve nuclear disarmament, what makes it urgently necessary for all States, without exception, to sign the various agreements designed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and what makes it imperative for the countries producing those weapons to undertake effective negotiations to reduce or eliminate them. They should begin, of course, with a solemn commitment to refrain completely from any kind of nuclear test.

But the very serious problem remains of the manufacture, accumulation and transfer of conventional weapons. My delegation, like many delegations present here, has had an opportunity to express its profound concern on this subject. I should like to state that my delegation endorses the well-judged arguments on this question advanced by the representative of Japan, Ambassador Motoo Ogiso, in this Committee at its meeting on 27 October last.

(Mr. Zea, Colombia)

The truth, as several other speakers have pointed out, is that the problem of the manufacture and transfer of conventional weapons has not been the subject of a careful analysis by the United Nations. Last year Colombia co-sponsored a draft resolution designed to draw the attention of the General Assembly to this question so that it could be studied in detail. Unfortunately we could not muster sufficient votes for that draft resolution to be adopted. That, however, does not detract from the importance of this problem, which is at present perhaps the most acute in the field of disarmament. The special session of the General Assembly will of necessity have to deal with it, because the gravest calamities suffered by the world since the existence of the United Nations have been due mainly to the growing trade in conventional weapons.

It bears repeating that international trade in arms has risen to exorbitant figures. The manufacture of these weapons constitutes one of the most lucrative industries in the world and is perhaps the most significant factor in the commercial prosperity of several industrialized countries. That trade involves a dynamic irreversible force. On the one hand, there are the financial interests of producing countries to sell weapons and, on the other, there is the requirement of other countries to obtain them. The incentive to acquire those weapons is often specific defence and security needs. In other cases, they are required simply to maintain predominance in internal affairs. But the fact remains that the acquisition of weapons by any country at once arouses an urgent desire to obtain weapons on the part of neighbouring countries, and thus begins a headlong arms race in the various regions. States try to have a degree of military superiority, which leads them to devote to military investments large sums that are sorely needed for other tasks that are far more urgent and have a superior claim. Here we would venture to recall a statement made last year to the effect that trade in conventional weapons has increased to \$20 billion per year. In this very debate it has already been pointed out that the largest and most highly qualified group of specialized technicians and engineers are employed on the production of those weapons.

(Mr. Zea, Colombia)

Is it possible to continue in this way with the knowledge that this terrifying figure represents death and pain on a corresponding scale throughout our planet? We realize that there are many interests involved in this field and that the matter is exceedingly complex, because some interests involved may be respectable, while others certainly are not. We must distinguish between the security and defence needs of nations and the voracious appetite of some Powers for profit for the purpose of enrichment and domination. Such a motive is quite simply monstrous, because we must not forget that on occasion large investments are made by countries with few resources.

With respect to this question we have already said on past occasions that trade in arms with the third world has the doubly damaging effect of the destructive power of the weapons, in the first place, and of the restrictive effect of that traffic on the efforts of those countries to contend with the tragedy of under-development. While poverty, ignorance and disease increase, so is the volume of armaments increasing.

(Mr. Zea, Colombia)

It is impossible to understand the degree of irresponsibility of certain developing countries today when resources which should first and foremost be devoted to the welfare of peoples are diverted to investments in the macabre arms trade. We fail to comprehend, for example, how in a brotherly continent such as Latin America, where armed struggle among fraternal countries is impossible and where it is extremely difficult to satisfy even the most elementary needs of its inhabitants, who for the most part lead a sub-human existence, the value of arms purchases amounted to more than \$500 million in 1975 and \$700 million in 1976.

In view of what I have just said, my delegation would insist, with all due respect, that the problem of the transfer of conventional weapons be given the greatest priority among the concerns of the United Nations General Assembly at its forthcoming special session. It would be most desirable for delegations to have sufficient documentation available to allow them clearly to determine the present and projected scope of this disquieting problem. It is understandable that disarmament activities should concentrate on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and bacteriological weapons, incendiary weapons and all those weapons that are capable of bringing about the most horrifying suffering. But if it is a question of protecting life, of banning violence and the use of force, we must insistently seek the elimination of every kind of weapon.

Let us hope that the concerted action of all nations will truly influence the minds of the leaders of the world, particularly those who bear the major responsibility for the fate of man at this time in history, so that something really effective will be achieved in the field of disarmament. So far, all has been confusion and failure. National interests are always placed above the supreme interests of mankind. Throughout the existence of the United Nations the efforts of this Organization to halt the arms race have been unproductive. Let us hope for a change in the course which we have been following and let us try to find the light and the certainty of a new direction in the unique opportunity which is now being given us really to build a better world. Accordingly, we most ardently hope that the purposes so grandiloquently expressed by those who presume to be the standard bearers of the salvation of mankind will at last become reassuring realities.

Mr. HAQUE (Bangladesh): Mr. Chairman, permit me first of all to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, and the other officers of the Committee on your unanimous election. I am confident that under your able leadership this Committee will successfully conclude the tasks entrusted to it.

Every year the First Committee faithfully records for posterity the dangers inherent in the failure to disarm. The statistics of the adverse consequences that accrue are terrifying in their magnitude: a global arms build-up which appears to have run amok with military expenditures progressing geometrically into hundreds of billions of dollars; a menacing pyramid of nuclear and conventional stockpiles which threaten global annihilation several times over; and a gigantic waste of money, technology and skilled personnel diverted from more productive channels to meet the positive needs of humanity for peace and economic development. Yearly the disarmament debate echoes the refrain that failure to act is a hazardous folly, a collective madness. Annually it underscores that humanity is falling behind in a race which it dare not lose, that the problem is far outrunning progress. And yet, as the Chairman of the Bangladesh delegation highlighted in the general debate in the General Assembly,

"... the only palliative /seems to be/ the recognition of the peril and the record of its danger and cost to mankind, with no significant advance to halt, control or reverse this /inexorable/ process."

(A/32/PV.21, p. 86)

For Bangladesh, therefore, the decision to convene the special session on disarmament, in the wake of the initiative undertaken by the non-aligned nations, holds an overwhelming significance. It offers a vital opportunity to tackle anew the fundamental problems in the field of disarmament within the full glare of international publicity and with the equal participation of all States irrevocably bound together by their common vulnerability to sudden extinction. No longer can smaller States afford to view this question from the peripheries of the process as mere spectators; nor can their role be reduced to that of exhortation. Today all nations and all individuals are accountable, for all are involved. They can and must play a part in the search for viable solutions.

(Mr. Hague, Bangladesh)

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session, Ambassador Ortiz de Rozas, for the commendable manner in which he has directed the affairs of the Committee. We have no doubt that under his informed leadership the groundwork will be laid for the success of the session.

In the welter of approaches to solutions of this central problem of our time, Bangladesh believes that there are two cardinal imperatives which have assumed overriding priority:

First and foremost is the recognition that considerations of national security are incompatible with disarmament, so long as there exists no viable international security system based on law and order and the collective responsibility of all nations for maintaining peace, abjuring the use of force and settling disputes through just and peaceful means. The real issue of disarmament therefore hinges on the crucial balance between national insecurity and the degree of international trust and confidence which can be collectively reinforced. It goes without saying, as the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines so aptly pointed out, that

"Nations cannot be expected to, and will not, disarm in a vacuum devoid of security guarantees." (A/C.1/32/PV.11, p. 36)

It follows, therefore, that the focus of our attention must be directed along two parallel and intimately connected fronts. In the first place, it is to be directed at nothing less than a warless world to be attained through a series of comprehensive measures aimed not merely at international control of armaments - meaning the stabilization of the levels of armaments - but a phased programme for the substantive reduction and elimination of such arms and the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under collective international control.

(Mr. Haque, Bangladesh)

The second would involve simultaneous progress towards an adequate world security system to fill the void. That, inter alia, must provide reliable mechanisms for verification and for compliance with disarmament agreements, lay down adequate procedures and means to settle disputes among nations peacefully, and strengthen the peace-keeping and peace-making ability of the international community through the collective policing of sanctions and permanent peace-keeping forces.

The hard realities of military and economic dominance notwithstanding, such an approach remains the only viable alternative in a world so interdependent that any action anywhere can have fearful repercussions on all, including the major Powers.

The second imperative priority concerns the fundamental link between security and economic development, inherent in the recognition that peace and prosperity are indivisible and that there can be no freedom from want without a concomitant freedom from fear. The economic reasons for disarmament are obvious in the plethora of statistics that have highlighted the incongruity of a world situation in which military programmes devour over \$300 billion annually, but in which more than half a billion people suffer serious malnutrition and starvation, nearly 500 million school-age children cannot be educated and half a billion people lack adequate shelter or health care.

It is not our intention to detail the various comparisons. They have been adequately highlighted in the reports of the Secretary-General and numerous governmental, non-governmental and individual publications. It goes without saying that such massive arms expenditures are destructive even if the weapons that proliferate as a result of those expenditures are never used, for they inflict painful economic hardship directly and indirectly on millions of people, and above all they undermine national, regional and international security.

(Mr. Haque, Bangladesh)

Bangladesh therefore whole-heartedly supports the initiative taken by the Nordic countries in proposing that the United Nations undertake a comprehensive study to spell out the implications of global military expenditure for all relevant aspects of the economy and to examine methods for a planned reallocation of resources towards more productive ends. A major field for study with a view to practical implementation is suggested by the widespread concern to effect a reduction in military budgets and to transfer human and material resources to areas of development that sorely require them.

The theory of the so-called irreversibility of the arms race is no longer credible. It is now evident that the escalating arms race is incompatible with the maintenance of international security, nor does it ensure or strengthen national security. The approach to disarmament is intimately rooted in the search for a new international political and economic order based on mutual trust and justice, on the principle of equal security for all States and on the recognition of national independence and international co-operation.

The acid test of our endeavour and that of the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament will lie in our ability to devise a programme of action-oriented recommendations incorporating specific objectives, meaningful priorities and targets that can be achieved, with inbuilt mechanisms for co-ordinating, reviewing and following up action - a programme that is flexible and realistic enough to command the widest measure of support.

The basic ingredients of such a programme are clearly discernible, the highest priority being accorded to measures pertaining to nuclear disarmament, the containment of qualitative vertical proliferation, including the cessation of nuclear weapons tests, and progressive steps for the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons, including delivery vehicles. Bangladesh firmly believes that the international community should universally decry the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances as being illegal under international law. It should enjoin on all nuclear-weapon States a pledge never to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon countries, along with their pledge never to be the first to use such weapons. We believe that affirmation

(Mr. Haque, Bangladesh)

of intention can acquire validity only when meaningful action is initiated and not made contingent upon action to be taken by others. It follows that the primary responsibility for taking the lead in this field devolves upon the major nuclear Powers. We hope that the promise of progress towards a halt in vertical proliferation made by the United States President and the Soviet Foreign Minister recently will be translated into fact and that there will be progress not only towards a freeze on the deployment of such weapons, but towards their progressive reduction. We also hope that that will be extended to agreements not to manufacture or deploy qualitatively improved nuclear weapons, and will lead to rapid progress towards the conclusion of a total nuclear-test-ban agreement.

Equally important are efforts to contain and curb horizontal proliferation by strengthening the credibility of measures towards this end, the most crucial being the psychological climate which would be created by the nuclear-weapon Powers through a prompt reduction of their nuclear arsenals. It is obvious that smaller nations will not be induced to give up their access to nuclear weapons without a reciprocal prohibition of the rights of nuclear-weapon States to retain them indefinitely. The crux of the argument is clearly the issue of the continued existence of nuclear weaponry in the hands of any one national Government, and not that of the potential possession of nuclear weapons by additional nations. Bangladesh, for its part, views the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty generally as a positive measure, but its views are contingent upon three interconnected concerns. Firstly, we consider that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty cannot be viewed as a discriminatory mechanism aimed at permanently dividing the world into nuclear and non-nuclear nations.

Secondly, we believe that a major incentive for adherence to the Treaty would be created if the security of non-nuclear countries against nuclear intimidation or attack were safeguarded through effective commitments incorporated into the Treaty. Those commitments must ensure not only active intervention in the event of threatened or actual aggression, but also a forthright assurance that the nuclear Powers themselves would guarantee not to use such weapons against non-nuclear countries.

(Mr. Haque, Bangladesh)

Finally, effective measures must be taken to ensure the adherence of all countries without exception to the NPT, and to scrutinize closely, monitor and expose the nuclear programmes of all States outside the régime, particularly those with near-nuclear potential.

Among the vital considerations affecting the Treaty are issues that revolve around the question of peaceful nuclear energy and, in particular, peaceful nuclear explosions. Nuclear Powers obviously cannot expect to retain indefinitely an option on nuclear monopoly without significant guarantees ensuring the broad availability of peaceful nuclear energy under safe, economic and equitable conditions for non-nuclear States. In this connexion, many developing countries are concerned about the dwindling prospects for increased collaboration and assistance in this field, given the intensification of commercial competition in the sale of nuclear technology and the vast profits attendant thereupon. In the meanwhile, the controversy over the fact that nuclear activities for peaceful purposes are indistinguishable from military nuclear activities, particularly in so far as they relate to peaceful nuclear explosions, is a concern that impinges on the future validity of the NPT.

There is therefore an imperative need to explore further means, such as how to motivate and attract more nations to adhere to the Treaty. Among the more important steps will be measures directed towards closer co-operation among all States in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the transfer of nuclear technology under non-discriminatory and universally applicable safeguards. In that regard Bangladesh welcomes the recent initiation of the work being undertaken by the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation Conference in Washington.

(Mr. Haque, Bangladesh)

In another important respect prospects appear to be improving in the CCD and in bilateral negotiations among the super-Powers; that is, with regard to a treaty banning most if not all chemical weapons. Bangladesh believes that progress towards that end should constitute an important priority not only because of the desirability but also the feasibility of reaching an early agreement.

There is a close interrelation between measures prohibiting the development of new weapons of mass destruction and the refinement of existing ones. We strongly support all measures directed towards the banning of any new weapons of mass destruction and limitations on research and development programmes towards this end.

The fact that responsibility for hastening the process of disarmament rests primarily upon the nuclear Powers does not, however, preclude non-nuclear States from assuming their own obligations. Of paramount interest to Bangladesh are measures to strengthen regional and subregional co-operation, to elaborate basic principles and identify elements of regional and subregional security, to further the relaxation of tension by the peaceful settlement of disputes, and to encourage agreements of mutual benefit on the basis of friendship and recognition of equal sovereignty.

Perhaps the most welcome trend in this regard is the movement towards regional approaches to disarmament apparent in initiatives such as the creation of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones. While there is an undoubted need to iron out difficulties with regard to definitions of both concepts and geographical locations as well as to the obligations incumbent upon nuclear Powers in connexion with such zones, we fully agree with the Secretary-General's conclusion that such

"Nuclear-free zones would in no way compete with or conflict with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and could indeed provide a means of extending and reinforcing the objectives of the Treaty and thus help to strengthen and promote the régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons."

Bangladesh has also repeatedly expressed its support for the proposal to declare the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, neutrality and denuclearization with the dual objective of excluding great-Power rivalry and competition and

(Mr. Haque, Bangladesh)

strengthening regional co-operation and security. We firmly believe that the disappearance of great-Power presence or rivalry would not automatically ensure peace and tranquillity in that area, for, while it would aid the process of achieving that peace and tranquillity, it could not substitute for the obligations to be contracted by the countries of the region themselves to ensure their security.

We fully support General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI), which calls upon the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to promote the objectives of establishing a system of universal collective security without military alliances and to strengthen international security through regional and international co-operation. Bangladesh welcomes the move to convene a conference of the above-mentioned States and believes that among its major tasks should be those directed towards strengthening guarantees and safeguards not only to preclude great-Power military presence in the area but also potential rivalry and competition among regional States. Bangladesh also supports the timely proposal of Madagascar to hold a preliminary meeting of the littoral and hinterland States in order to evolve a common position on such a régime for the Indian Ocean.

Like many other countries, Bangladesh subscribes to the view that among the serious omissions of past disarmament discussions have been measures to curb the phenomenal growth in the conventional arms race. More than four fifths of world military expenditures are devoted to conventional arms. World-wide trade in arms has escalated to such an extent that more than \$18 billion are spent annually in such trade. Developing nations import arms at the rate of \$6 billion a year. Since the Second World War these weapons have contributed to the deaths of millions of people in conflicts located mainly in third-world countries. In a sense the real threat to international security continues to emanate less from potential nuclear war than from the use of conventional weapons. In a world in which the most pronounced phenomenon is the unequal relations between States, local wars arising out of fear of domination, exploitation and interference in internal affairs constitute a continuing danger, particularly since they can and do draw into their vortex the bigger nations of the world. Bangladesh believes that the ramifications of these problems should also be the subject of discussion and recommendations at the special session.

(Mr. Haque, Bangladesh)

In so far as institutional and negotiation mechanisms are concerned, Bangladesh strongly supports the strengthening of the central role of the United Nations in the disarmament process. This obviously arises from the fact that the obligations eventually established for the achievement of disarmament must be applied universally and verified impartially, and therefore only a global agency can adequately perform the task. Moreover, all nations must be equally involved and committed in the performance of such tasks and must have the opportunity to express views and to make proposals. However, Bangladesh agrees that a variety of functional forums large and small could operate simultaneously. We agree that attention must be devoted to streamlining and restructuring the working methods of existing bodies so as to facilitate greater co-ordination of mechanisms within the United Nations, regional organizations and bilateral negotiations. This would constitute an important field of activity for the special session.

If there is any consolation to be derived from the mad onrush of the arms race it is the fact that it has brought humanity face to face with the perception of its own fallibility and insignificance. The risks, hazards and costs of delay in halting and reversing this seemingly inexorable process are now well known. In the final analysis the world is faced with the choice between pursuing its present course towards self-destruction or seeking a world in which considerations of individual national power and prestige are abandoned in favour of collective responsibility for a universal security system of global law and order. This is the challenge that now faces us.

Mr. GUNA-KASEM (Thailand): Mr. Chairman, I wish first of all on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you on your election to the high office of Chairman of this very important Committee. Your ability and long experience suitably qualify you for your post. We also wish to extend our congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen, Rapporteur and all officers of the Committee.

The fact that the present decade has been declared the Disarmament Decade and that for the first time in history the General Assembly will in 1978 convene a special session devoted to disarmament matters clearly demonstrates the strong desire of the world community to strengthen international peace and security through arms control and the slowing-down of arms races and to take effective steps towards disarmament.

(Mr. Guna-Kasem, Thailand)

The reasons for these desires are obvious. To mention but a few, first, arms control and disarmament would help lower the over-all tension in the world. Secondly, with less money, material and manpower resources utilized in the field of armament, these valuable resources saved could be diverted to be better utilized for the social and economic improvement of all peoples in the world.

In our view, the highest priority in the field of disarmament must be given to the problem of nuclear disarmament. In spite of continuous efforts over the years, both at the United Nations and other international forums, to achieve this, nuclear disarmament is still far from being realized and, worse still, the nuclear arms race continues unimpeded in terms of both quality and quantity.

The risk of a further proliferation of nuclear weapons presents one of the most serious problems facing the world community. Today, the nuclear overkill capability belonging to only a handful of countries already poses a grave threat. A world in which still more countries possess nuclear weapons would be extremely dangerous and, ultimately, even disastrous to mankind. As nuclear weapons proliferate further, not only is international peace and security endangered, but efforts towards nuclear disarmament would become progressively more complicated and eventually unmanageable.

In this connexion, there is an added problem, which is how to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons while at the same time securing the use of nuclear energy to help meet the increasing global demand for energy. Our common task is to try to pass a great test by simultaneously pursuing these two goals in harmony with each other.

My delegation is of the view that further efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons must start off with the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, which my country has acceded to and which, up till now, is the only basic legal instrument for halting nuclear proliferation. Most non-nuclear-weapon States have recognized the danger of nuclear proliferation and have acceded to this Treaty. While recognizing its imperfections, the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty remains, in our view, the cornerstone of an effective non-proliferation policy. It is our earnest hope that all States which have not yet acceded to it will soon do so, in view of the over-all importance of a safer world for us all.

(Mr. Guna-Kasen, Thailand)

Moreover, all nations bear a grave responsibility to see that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes will not be misused for other objectives. In this regard, firm support for the highly valuable work of the International Atomic Energy Agency is important for the implementation of effective nuclear safeguards.

My country followed the progress of the US-USSR Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) with interest. Though the talks went on for five years, the two super-Powers, unhappily, failed to reach final agreement by the deadline of 3 October of this year. This failure to agree was a disappointment to us all. My delegation, however, takes note that both countries issued statements on 3 October pledging that, while making further efforts to reach a second agreement in the context of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, they would continue to respect the first SALT agreement on a reciprocal basis.

My delegation is in favour of a comprehensive test ban which would provide a solution to the problems of peaceful nuclear development, and would close dangerous loopholes for both horizontal and vertical proliferation. We also continue to hope that faster progress will be forthcoming in the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament with regard to the conclusion of a ban on the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, as well as of a ban on specific types of new weapons of mass destruction.

In the last few years, while the arms race continued to escalate, discussions on various disarmament issues have also begun or have been intensified. It is too early and, hence, not possible yet to predict whether or not real and tangible progress has been made. But the fact that these negotiations, especially between the two great Powers, are going on must be viewed as an encouraging sign. Last year, the General Assembly agreed to hold a special session on disarmament in 1978, to be devoted exclusively to disarmament questions, which we hope will form a milestone on our path of progress toward genuine disarmament.

(Mr. Guna-Kasem, Thailand)

My delegation is of the view that this forthcoming special session provides a unique opportunity to secure progress in disarmament and arms control. The period of the meeting could be utilized not only to intensify the establishment of new disarmament machinery, but also to appraise past developments and progress to date. Since the subject matter is of great importance to us all, it is hoped that delegations, when identifying the factors which have obstructed disarmament and arms control, will concentrate less on apportioning blame to anyone or any group, and more on making a real and concerted effort to overcome those obstacles confronting all the participants.

The special session should also deal with the problem of control of conventional weapons, which is one of the biggest problems facing us today, as well as with the comprehensive programme of disarmament based on previous United Nations studies since 1970. The success of the special session depends much on the hard work and careful preparation by the Preparatory Committee. My delegation is heartened by the progress and success so far achieved by the Preparatory Committee, in particular, the constructive atmosphere which enabled its members to arrive at decisions by consensus. This smooth passage reflects, without doubt, the adroit and able handling of the Committee's work by its Chairman, Ambassador Ortiz de Rozas of Argentina, to whom I wish to pay a high tribute.

One of the subjects which should be thoroughly studied and reviewed in depth by the forthcoming special session is the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, and in particular the work of its Centre for Disarmament, designed to help make this world Organization a more effective instrument to achieve arms control and genuine disarmament, which would make the world a safer place to live for all of us.

Mr. OULD HAMODY (Mauritania) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to offer you the warm congratulations of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. I would also request you to convey to the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur our congratulations and our sincere wish to co-operate.

We men of the desert are familiar with a strange phenomenon - the mirage, where pools of water offering refreshment, and perhaps even rescue from certain death prove, after a frantic rush to reach them, to be no more than figments of a thirst-tormented imagination.

I am most tempted to draw a parallel with the progress achieved by our international community towards general disarmament. Like the mirage, our progress in this field, which is so vital for our collective survival, when it sometimes offers an ephemeral and deceptive relief, is only all the more certain to leave behind a bitter aftertaste in which resentment and disappointment vie with the uncertainty of a heavily mortgaged future.

(Mr. Ould Hamody, Mauritania)

The overwhelming majority has fully expressed its concern at this situation, in this Committee and there is no need to expatiate on it. Certain international treaties have, it is true, held out some hope of sure and regular progress towards general disarmament. It is also true that, thanks to painstaking craftsmanship and a wealth of self-sacrifice, patience and diplomacy, a certain dynamism, holding promise for the very long term, has emerged in the specialized agencies of our Organization, as well as in our Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and our Ad Hoc Committee. Lastly, it is true, that mankind can occasionally take some small comfort from bilateral agreements or commitments.

But the terrifying and permanent reality is that described in document A/32/88, "Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security", as follows:

"The threat of ultimate self-destruction as a result of nuclear war is the greatest peril facing the world. For many years, nuclear arsenals have been sufficient to destroy the entire world, but the accumulation and technological refinement of nuclear weapons continues, enhancing the perils and providing increasingly ample means for the final obliteration of mankind." (para. 1)

This constantly increasing accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, which in 1974 numbered 11,000 warheads for the so-called tactical forces alone of the world's two major Powers, is compounded by horizontal proliferation. We are told by the report of experts cited above that some 30 countries will have the capability of being nuclear Powers in a few years' time. This of course raises the urgent problem of serious disarmament, where the objective is less to perpetuate a dangerous and unjustified monopoly than to ensure the gradual and universally accepted elimination of nuclear weapons, and hence of the nuclear threat. This result can only be achieved - and our delegation has never ceased to say so here - through a process which involves the cessation of all types of nuclear tests, an end to the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the destruction of all existing stocks, the prohibition and destruction of all bacteriological and chemical weapons and the gradual reduction of all conventional weapons.

That is without any question a long-term undertaking which will require, among other things, political will on the part of States and particularly on the part of the principal military Powers.

(Mr. Ould Hamody, Mauritania)

Such a universal political will has already made possible, as the result of a proposal by the non-aligned countries in calling for a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, the unanimous decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 31/189 B of 21 December 1976, to convene such a special session. While congratulating the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session on the work it has done, we would venture to recall what was said on this subject on 4 October 1977 by our Minister of State for Foreign Affairs:

"The General Assembly's forthcoming special session on disarmament should therefore, in our view, attempt to break new ground by proposing general and complete disarmament. On that occasion a programme of action could be worked out made up of three elements, mainly, the strengthening of the denuclearized zones; a precise policy of disarmament at the regional and world levels; and utilization of the resources thus released to assist development." (A/32/PV.19, p. 17)

We have already repeated our views concerning a precise policy of disarmament; at the regional level, the only conceivable approach is an extension of the denuclearized zones and zones of peace.

If the special session makes it possible to propound a disarmament philosophy and perhaps a theoretical framework for the achievement of our common goal, it will, for reasons which are very familiar to this Committee, have a limited immediate impact. On the other hand, an extension of denuclearized zones and zones of peace will pave the way for a détente that will be real because it will be universal.

We take this opportunity to express once again our satisfaction at the responsible and praiseworthy initiative taken by the Latin American countries in banning nuclear weapons from their geographical area. We hope that their example will be widely followed and that we shall soon see South Asia declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and fulfilment of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

If it were only up to the Arab Nation and the other fraternal peoples of the Middle East, that region, so vital, so sensitive and so essential to world peace and security, would already have been established as a nuclear-weapon-free zone through a solemn undertaking on the part of all entities of the region. Unfortunately, the bad faith and the obstruction of the aggressor have prevented the attainment of that objective, despite the laudable initiative of Egypt and Iran and the support of the other fraternal peoples.

(Mr. Ould Hamody, Mauritania)

In our continent of Africa, resolutions calling upon all States to consider the continent of Africa as a nuclear-free zone are openly flouted by the South African racist minority régime which is attempting to become a nuclear Power in order to intimidate the liberation movements of southern Africa.

In two years the Disarmament Decade, which aroused such hopes, will come to an end, paradoxically with an expansion of arsenals, an increase in their destructiveness and a further sophistication of weapons. The last report on the activities of our Organization tells us:

"In a world where scientific and technological capability is one of the keys to the future, 25 per cent of the world's scientific manpower and 40 per cent of all research and development spending is engaged for military purposes."

(A/32/1, p. 13)

There could be no better description of the heavy tribute we are paying to bring about with a light heart our own destruction. What a world this could have been if this scientific personnel and if these research budgets had been harnessed to the task of correcting the iniquitous world economic system and the social imbalance between North and South, if the towering intellects and vast sums allocated to death could be devoted to appropriate development aid.

Yet in a world where States and continents are so extraordinarily interdependent, and where development assistance - setting aside its function as the expression of solidarity among peoples and nations - appears as an act of justice, if not of self-defence, it is no longer necessary to demonstrate the urgent need to undertake a genuine over-all disarmament, both of men's minds and of their arsenals, and to allocate the vast sums devoted to death instead to bridging the ever-widening gap between those who suffer from overfeeding and those who are dying of famine.

Mr. MARTINEZ (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, we wish to convey to you on behalf of the Venezuelan delegation, our congratulations on your election as Chairman of this Committee, as well as to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Hollai of Hungary and Ambassador Pastinen of Finland, and to Mr. Correa, the Rapporteur. We are certain that under your wise guidance we shall successfully complete the work entrusted to us.

(Mr. Martinez, Venezuela)

It is customary for the First Committee, charged with the consideration of such delicate matters as political and security questions, every year to have new items on its agenda even though for the traditional items which have already been debated at length we have not been able to reach definite commitments or agreements. We are likewise accustomed to hear statements permeated with pessimism. Little and infrequent progress is the counterpart to an ever-growing number of resolutions. It could be said that resolutions proliferate at almost the same rate as nuclear weapons, new weapons of mass destruction and new and sophisticated conventional weapons are produced.

No longer is it a matter of calling for substantial progress in every sphere of relations among States, including that of disarmament, which is the item to which this Committee is now devoting its attention; what is imperative is that we should now be able to cite specific agreements and effective measures.

A few weeks ago we listened with interest to the President of the United States who, when speaking of nuclear weapons, stated:

"On a reciprocal basis we are willing now to reduce them by 10 per cent, 20 per cent or even 50 per cent." (A/32/PV.18, p. 6)

Yet, a few days later in this Committee the representative of the United States, Ambassador Adrian Fisher, indicated that much time and dedicated effort would be required to arrive at reductions of this magnitude.

We expectantly await a response from the Soviet Union to this United States proposal. Even if these Powers were to reduce their nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent we believe that the remaining 50 per cent would be sufficient to destroy even the last vestige of human life on our planet.

The address given by President Carter in the General Assembly and the policy of non-proliferation of the United States have aroused some expectations in the international community, as have the bilateral negotiations now being held between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of their strategic systems, and the prohibition of chemical and radiological weapons, as well as the trilateral negotiations among the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests.

(Mr. Martinez, Venezuela)

The delegation of Venezuela hopes that those negotiations will be concluded in the next few months so that the United Nations body engaged in disarmament negotiations, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) may, without delay, proceed to draft the respective multilateral treaties.

It is the responsibility of all countries and in particular of the nuclear Powers, to adopt effective measures to halt the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, since it represents an imminent danger to international peace and security and has destructive consequences for the economic and social development of peoples. Such measures are becoming even more imperative since the Disarmament Decade and the Second Development Decade will shortly come to an end and since the international community is clamouring for the establishment of a new economic and social order which would enable the poorer and less well endowed countries to emerge from their stagnation.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela in his statement to the General Assembly at its present session, pointed out:

"There is a definite contrast between the economic and social restrictions imposed on our peoples and the uncontrollable, suicidal explosion of military expenditure and the arms race." (A/32/PV.6, p. 42-45)

Just as the production of weapons is endless so have been the appeals made and it is clear that there is no correspondence between the desire and the reality. If what is said on the one hand and what is done on the other were measured in terms of logic and common sense there would be no compromise either, but it is obvious that what is senseless and wrong always prevails by a long chalk.

The limited measures attained so far in the sphere of disarmament after intense negotiations have not gone beyond their own frontiers, nor has the modest impetus they have generated altered the general situation which remains one that we honestly believe should not exist. Despite this desolate picture, we must intensify and diversify the quest for solutions in the already arduous process of preventing the mass annihilation of human beings by nuclear weapons. In recent years emphasis has been placed on the need openly to disclose to the public the unprecedented capacity for destruction of nuclear weapons and weapons of other kinds. There seems to be no adequate knowledge of the subject but this

(Mr. Martinez, Venezuela)

is fundamentally due to the fact that the improvement and sophistication of weapons has taken place at an extraordinary pace while parallel efforts to disseminate information have been delayed or quashed.

We share the view that by a systematic information campaign it will be possible to develop international awareness at every level so as to oppose the arms build-up. We have already emphasized the moderating influence which duly informed public opinion can and must exercise in the achievement of specific purposes.

Accordingly, we shall continue to encourage any initiative designed to make such a contribution feasible. At the request of various delegations, the United Nations has undertaken the preparation of studies and reports with a view to presenting a succinct and clear picture of the various problems and implications of the many aspects of the arms race.

One of the most enlightening United Nations reports refers to the economic and social consequences of the arms race and of military expenditures and was first issued in 1971. Because of the importance and the dynamic character of the item, the General Assembly, in its resolution 3462 (XXX), requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of qualified consultant experts appointed by him to bring that report up to date. Venezuela had the honour to be among that group represented by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Alberto Consalvi.

In dramatic terms, the report describes the vast amount of various resources allocated to the fabrication and improvement of all kinds of weapons which should rather be devoted to public services such as health, education, housing and the protection of the environment and, in general, could further the economic and social progress of all peoples.

A review of the various chapters of the report leads us to serious reflections on the future of mankind, but in any case it reaffirms the need to act decisively and without delay to change the uncontrollable course of expenditure to promote industries of war which only serve forces that, taking refuge in inadmissible pretexts, feed and justify war.

(Mr. Martinez, Venezuela)

The report on the Economic and Social Consequences of the Arms Race and of Military Expenditures is a fundamental contribution to be taken into account in disarmament negotiations, particularly the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V of the report. The delegation of Venezuela hopes that the United Nations will circulate this document as widely as possible.

Every year we have supported, and we continue to support, resolutions regarding the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world as one of the most effective means of halting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthening international peace and security.

In 1964 the African Heads of State or Government signed the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. Since then the General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions regarding the implementation of that Declaration in which States with nuclear weapons and nuclear technological capability are urged to refrain from testing, manufacturing, using or sitting nuclear weapons on the African continent and to refrain from providing technological assistance to any African country which would enable it to manufacture or use nuclear weapons. Not only have these resolutions not been heeded but, what is more, an African country repudiated by the international community for practising its infamous policy of racial discrimination will be capable of producing nuclear weapons and thus jeopardizing the collective security of that continent. It is our sincere belief that the United Nations must adopt urgent and decisive measures to put an end to the nuclear danger represented by South Africa.

Within the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, of special significance for Latin America was the signature by the United States of Additional Protocol I of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America. Venezuela cannot fail once again to appeal to those nuclear Powers which have still not acceded to Additional Protocols I and II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to do so in order to guarantee the denuclearization of the zone.

(Mr. Martinez, Venezuela)

In the first half of this year, the fourth session of the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts closed in Geneva with the approval of additional Protocols I and II of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Nevertheless, the Conference did not succeed in prohibiting the use of incendiary weapons and certain other conventional weapons, and under resolution 22 (IV) requested the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-second session to arrange to convene in 1979 a governmental conference on conventional weapons. The delegation of Venezuela strongly supports the holding of such a conference and, in conjunction with several other delegations, including the delegation of Sweden, will sponsor a draft resolution to that end, with the hope of obtaining unanimous support in this Committee.

An item which is becoming increasingly relevant and important is the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Nuclear energy has been given close attention by our Government. We believe it represents an answer to the demands for energy, a matter so vital to the economy of the world. For us, it represents an important factor for the future which will enable us to reserve our fossil fuel for higher ends, which will include the supplying of world markets. Venezuela therefore participated in the organizing committee of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation Conference in Washington. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, speaking in the general debate in the Assembly, stated:

"The energy problem, which is rendered more acute by voracious consumption of traditional resources such as gas and oil, could now have had different options had not research on alternative sources, like solar energy, been held back by the large transnational corporations which for more than a century maintained a monopoly over the traditional sources. As a result of this lack of foresight, all of mankind now faces an uncertain future."

(A/32/PV.6, p. 47)

Not all doubts have been dispelled regarding the use of nuclear energy for either peaceful or war purposes. A supranational control is required to regulate the activities of States in the use of this type of energy, and in this respect we must emphasize the fundamental role which is being played by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(Mr. Martinez, Venezuela)

No State can be denied its free and sovereign access to technology and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in accordance with a universal system of safeguards. The transfer of technology, equipment and material for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy cannot be of a discriminatory character.

Venezuela supported the holding of a special session of the General Assembly devoted exclusively to disarmament questions and we participated in the work of its Preparatory Committee. At this time, it is appropriate to reiterate our gratitude to Ambassador Ortiz de Rozas for the report which he submitted and for the excellent work that he is doing.

Several bodies have been established and numerous formulas and recommendations have been proposed to contain the arms race, but it has not yet been possible to arrive at satisfactory results. The convening of a special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament represents a collective attempt to direct disarmament efforts into more effective channels.

The success of the special session will depend on the unanimous efforts and active participation of all countries Members of the United Nations. By that time we hope that positive results will have been achieved at the bilateral and tripartite talks among the nuclear Powers to which I referred at the beginning of my statement, and that we shall have a report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament which, unlike the report before us, will reflect some progress in its work.

In conclusion, I should like to express the gratitude of the delegation of Venezuela for the active work being carried out by the United Nations Disarmament Centre, for its devoted and fruitful assistance to the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session, and for the recent publication of the first volume of the Disarmament Yearbook, which we consider to be extremely useful.

Mr. HARRY (Australia): Each year in this forum we review developments in the past 12 months in the field of arms control and disarmament, and seek to measure the progress made in efforts to reverse the arms race and minimize the risk of war. Too often there has not been much to review and precious little to measure, while global expenditure on armed forces continues to rise, and weapons become more lethal and more sophisticated.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

This year, when the Assembly began there seemed cause for cautious optimism. During the preceding year, there had probably been more effort devoted to securing new arms control and arms limitation measures than in any comparable period since the 1960s. As the Australian Foreign Minister said in his statement in the plenary meeting on 28 September, we had been encouraged by the discussions taking place between the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain on a comprehensive test ban agreement. Mr. Peacock welcomed also the significant measure of progress which had been achieved in the strategic arms limitation talks between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Concurrent with this activity among the large Powers we had supported the initiative taken by the non-aligned movement in 1976. That group, despairing at the lack of significant progress in the disarmament area in recent years, had moved the Assembly to hold, next year, a special session of the General Assembly to be devoted, for the first time, to disarmament.

A third major area of discussion throughout the past year has been the increasing attention devoted to the problem of avoiding proliferation of nuclear weapons, while promoting peaceful uses. In Australia a nation-wide debate continued on the issue of whether the mining and export of uranium should be permitted. Debates on various aspects of this problem have been taking place in other countries. Those debates have demonstrated the complex questions which arise in relation to non-proliferation issues. In addition to security concerns, major questions involving the economics of energy, health, the environment and other social factors all have had to be addressed.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

These three developments demonstrate that we have entered a period of intense activity in the disarmament and arms control area. In such a period, it is more than ever essential, in the collective interests of the international community, that we harmonize our efforts with a view to steady progress towards the goal to which we all aspire - enhancement of prosperity in conditions of international peace and security. This will require hard work and a very great deal of patience.

In recent years the Australian Government has focused its attention on nuclear disarmament questions as those deserving priority attention. The focus of my Government on these issues has sharpened further in recent months. In his statement on 28 September my Foreign Minister outlined what Australia regards as the three central issues of nuclear arms control: first, achievement of universal adherence to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty; secondly, the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban agreement and its acceptance by all States; and, thirdly, continued progress by the United States and the Soviet Union in their negotiations on strategic arms limitations.

These three issues are of course closely interrelated. The non-proliferation Treaty requires the nuclear-weapon States which signed it to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the arms race. In the same instrument, non-nuclear-weapon States forswore acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted safeguards on their nuclear industries. Finally, countries in a position to do so undertook to co-operate in the peaceful development of nuclear industry.

The Australian Government has always attached great importance to the carrying out by the nuclear Powers of their obligation to stop the nuclear arms race. There are currently two steps which the nuclear-weapon States could, and in our view should, take in this direction. The first is the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban agreement; the second would be for the United States and the Soviet Union to call a halt to their bilateral strategic nuclear arms race and to begin the reduction of their nuclear arsenals.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

My Government has for a long time attached urgency as well as importance to the cessation of nuclear testing in all environments. This should of course ultimately become a comprehensive, universally binding and permanent agreement. We accordingly welcomed the beginning this year of discussions between the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom aimed at agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty. We appreciate that there are major issues to be resolved in these discussions before the treaty can be concluded. Some of the complexities were mentioned yesterday by my New Zealand colleague in his excellent statement. But there is a great deal at stake and the treaty must be concluded, and concluded quickly.

It has been a matter of deep disappointment to my Government that in the atmosphere as well as underground nuclear testing has taken place in the last three months, even while the Assembly has been meeting. We regret that there are two nuclear-weapon Powers which still refuse to adhere to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. While one of those States has at last ceased atmospheric testing, atmospheric tests are still being conducted by the other. It would have been an earnest of their political will if the three nuclear-weapon States currently conducting negotiations had, by agreement or unilaterally but, in any event, in concert, ceased testing from the time at which they took the decision to commence discussions. The restrictions which entry into force of a comprehensive test ban treaty would place on vertical proliferation lie in the fact that the capability to develop new and more sophisticated nuclear explosive devices would be severely inhibited. This would in turn restrain the development and deployment of more advanced nuclear missile systems. A possible longer-term benefit of a comprehensive test ban would be that it would deny the opportunity for testing of existing nuclear-weapon stockpiles, thereby not enabling States which possess them the chance to determine the reliability of those weapon systems. In the longer run, therefore, the reliability of these systems would have to be called into question.

We understand that the trilateral discussions have just adjourned until December. We regret any delay this may involve and would urge the countries concerned to maintain the momentum of their negotiations, for the

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

political and psychological consequences of the cessation of testing and the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty would be most beneficial, particularly if that were to be followed by agreements for cessation of production and reduction of stockpiles of weapons.

For the demonstration by nuclear-weapon States of real determination to cease their "vertical" nuclear arms race would be a positive encouragement to all other non-nuclear-weapon States to join the non-proliferation Treaty and thus to strengthen international measures for the restriction of horizontal proliferation.

In respect of the trilateral negotiations, we have received reports only this morning that Mr. Brezhnev has announced that the Soviet Union is prepared to reach agreement on a moratorium covering nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes along with a ban on all nuclear-weapon tests for a definite period. No doubt our colleague from the Soviet Union will be able to elaborate further on this statement for us. However, if this decision of the USSR makes possible progress towards reconciliation of the major differences of opinion within the talks, it is welcome news indeed.

It remains my Government's view that universal adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty is essential in the interests of the international community. It is gratifying that some two-thirds of the Members of the United Nations have already elected to join the Treaty. The greater the number of adherents to the Treaty the more cogently it can be urged that the nuclear-weapon States must abide by their part of the bargain - to cease their arms race and to co-operate in development of nuclear energy. Australia rates adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty as the most convincing demonstration of a commitment by a State to disavow the option of acquiring nuclear weapons, since accession to the Treaty represents an internationally binding commitment to this end.

It is sometimes suggested that States which strongly support measures in the interests of non-proliferation and which insist on rigorous safeguards against the acquisition of materials readily adapted to nuclear explosions are somehow opposed to the provision of nuclear material, technology and equipment

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

for peaceful purposes. I sense, in addition, a sort of suspicion that developed States are in some manner ganging up to deny to developing States the nuclear technology which may become critical for their development. I believe that the record of the Australian people in the field of co-operation in development is such that there can be no serious doubt as to our motivation in this connexion.

The principal concern of the Australian Government and people has been the prospect of nuclear weapons, now confined to a few States, coming to be held by many States, or even coming into the hands of irresponsible terrorist groups, a development which must be of concern to the whole international community. Australia is therefore committed to the advocacy of the strongest acceptance of obligations to non-proliferation which States are able to make. At the same time, Australia is fully aware of the fact that nuclear energy is likely to become an essential source of energy to a world with deficiencies in non-renewable energy sources. In the period since the non-proliferation Treaty came into force, the international community has come to attach even greater weight to the importance of nuclear energy as a source to meet future major demands. By the middle or end of the next decade, the world's oil resources may be inadequate to meet anticipated energy demands. This factor gives even greater weight to the third part of the bargain upon which the non-proliferation Treaty was based. We cannot realistically discuss the objective of nuclear non-proliferation without considering the problem of transfer of nuclear energy technology and the safeguards necessary to ensure that highly enriched uranium and plutonium are not diverted to the manufacture of nuclear explosives.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs described in his plenary statement briefly the main policy decisions of the Australian Government, but there are a few points which I should like to underline in the present context.

On 25 August this year our Prime Minister announced to Parliament the decision of the Government to develop further Australia's uranium resources. That decision took place after an exhaustive inquiry which took over two years. It is of considerable importance, because it has been assessed that Australia possesses some 20 per cent of the Western world's known reserves of low-cost uranium. Australia's decision to proceed further with uranium development followed from four fundamental considerations. Two of them were largely domestic: consideration of the environmental consequences of mining, and provision for the welfare and interests of the aboriginal people working on and living around the uranium development sites. The other two considerations were essentially international and very relevant to our debate. They were the need to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation and the need to supply essential sources of energy to an energy deficient world. Those two factors are integral and inseparable in the approach of the Australian Government towards the export of our uranium. I believe that if there is a consensus among States Members of the United Nations it is that the transfer and development provision of nuclear materials, equipment and technology cannot be considered in isolation from the need for the strongest guarantees that the risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons is all but eliminated.

At the same time as my Government has been reviewing its attitude to non-proliferation questions, it has taken further steps to contribute to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, particularly by developing countries. At the recent meeting of the general conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) we were able to announce that Australia will accede to the IAEA Asian regional co-operation agreement in nuclear science and technology. Additionally, the Australian Government will voluntarily meet in full its assessed contribution to the IAEA General Fund and Special Appeal.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

I recite these facts to underline that Australia recognizes the right of all States to share in the utilization of nuclear power for peaceful purposes. We believe that there should be the widest possible agreement on an appropriate framework for the management and operation of the nuclear fuel cycle. This requires stringent safeguards and controls on nuclear materials, equipment and technology to prevent their misuse for military purposes. But alongside these, and of equal importance, there must be incentives for countries that have unreservedly foresworn the nuclear weapons option. Such a framework will strengthen the non-proliferation régime. In this regard, Australia strongly supported the institution of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) and actively participated in its first session.

In summary, the Australian Government's attitude on the question of proliferation is that it is reasonable that States which have in their own interests and those of the international community given up, through accession to the NPT, the option of nuclear weapons, should be entitled to implementation by the nuclear-weapons States of their obligation to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race. Those that have disavowed the nuclear weapons option should receive special consideration in the supply of nuclear materials and equipment for peaceful energy production. At the same time, the suppliers of nuclear fuel have a special responsibility to the world community to supply only under safeguards adequate to prevent diversion from the fuel cycle. The question of international safeguards is one to which we may need to return when considering the report of the IAEA. I stress only that the question of the duty of a country which is a principal supplier of uranium is one on which the Australian people searched its conscience very thoroughly before the Government reached its present policy.

Events of the past year and the discussions in the Preparatory Committee have deepened our conviction that the decision of the General Assembly last year to convene a special session devoted to disarmament in 1978 was most timely. The special session will provide a valuable opportunity to review the entire range of disarmament issues and has already given an added impetus to efforts to make headway in this field. There already appears to be a consensus that the special session should not itself attempt to negotiate any particular agreement, but

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

that it should formulate a declaration of international opinion on the necessity for and the principles which should govern progress in disarmament, establish which areas deserve priority attention, and review the machinery of negotiation.

We in Australia are determined that the special session should not become merely another meeting of the First Committee under a different name and at a slightly higher level. We appeal to all delegations not to approach the special session with the intention of merely reiterating established positions. If we are to secure a worth-while result from the session, all participants need to have as their basic approach a determination to seek fresh avenues and a firm political will to make progress in the disarmament and arms control area.

The Australian Government's attitude towards the special session is governed by its traditionally constructive approach to disarmament issues. We know that the goal of disarmament and arms control measures is not the achievement of disarmament measures per se for themselves, but the creation of conditions of international peace and security which can render unnecessary, indeed unthinkable, recourse to war as a means of settling disputes with all the attendant diversion of resources from economic and social needs to the maintenance of war machines. The principle of general and complete disarmament of course remains the ultimate objective. To attain that goal, however, far-reaching changes would be required in the structure and organization of international relations in order to secure the removal of the causes and sources of confrontation and tension between States. That may well be a long process, in spite of the ardent desire of all peoples for a peaceful world.

Meanwhile there are a number of short-term, feasible measures which States could adopt quickly to ease international tension and to facilitate achievement of the longer-term goals. To be successful, such short-term measures, as with all disarmament measures, have to be based on the premise that States must not suffer any decrease in their sense of security. It would help mutual confidence, for example, if States could, as a deliberate act of policy, maintain military forces manifestly designed for defensive rather than offensive capabilities. It is axiomatic that if two States in a relationship of military balance each reduced their armaments by an amount leaving them in a state of lesser but equal military capability, then they would enjoy the same level of security as before, but at less

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

cost. On the other side of the coin it is obvious that if one State introduces major quantitative or qualitative improvements to its weapons arsenals, then neighbouring States are apt to perceive that they are less secure and, out of concern for their own national security, they will seek to increase proportionately their own military capability.

(Mr. Harry, Australia)

We usually hear the term "mutual deterrence" applied only in the context of the balance of strategic deterrence between the super-Powers. But the concept is more widely applicable. There are two prescriptions for stable relations between States. The first is the most desirable, and that is when States enjoy a relationship that is such that recourse to war to solve disputes is unthinkable. The second is when the option to use arms to resolve differences cannot be entertained because none of the States concerned could guarantee military victory.

We all know that disarmament is not possible until the main sources of tension between States which can pose a threat to each other are eliminated. But while working towards this long-term goal we should focus simultaneously on encouraging States to recognize the concept of mutual deterrence and on the basis of it to lower their levels of mutual military preparedness and thus reduce the cost of maintaining military forces and minimize the danger inflicted in any conflict while at the same time maintaining the same relative sense of security.

It is my delegation's hope that the special session will point out the direction which the international community should follow to achieve significant measures of arms control and disarmament. An additional worthwhile goal for the special session would be to make States aware that there are simple measures which, if all States were prepared to apply them, could in a very short time enhance the conditions of international security and provide an important foundation for dealing with the fundamental issues which have to be addressed. In my delegation's opinion, this is an essential step if the international community hopes to see major progress in applying the measures upon which the existence of life as we know it depends.

Mr. AL-SAHAF (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. Chairman, at the outset I should like on behalf of the delegation of Iraq to express to you our warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. Through you, I should also like to congratulate the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

Disarmament items are of growing interest to world public opinion. They have become increasingly important, particularly in the work of the General Assembly. The 1970s have been declared the Disarmament Decade. We are drawing close to the end of this Decade, and yet so far no real progress has been made either within the framework of talks between the great Powers or within the framework of our international Organization. On the contrary, we note that the weapons-producing countries are bent on increasing their nuclear arsenals and on concentrating their efforts on developing weapons such as the neutron bomb and cruise missiles. These, together with the continuing arms race and its extension to the sea-bed and even to outer space, are most discouraging developments.

As the Committee is aware, almost \$1 billion is spent daily, essentially by the great Powers, on accumulating means of destruction, yet those great Powers hope they will never have to use them and state that they will not do so. Within the last year there has been no major rise in military expenditures. What does this mean? Does it mean that the international community has been able to put an end to the arms build-up? The answer is no. The fact that there has been no substantial increase in military expenditures reflects only that weapons producers are now seeking to improve them and not to increase their number. From day to day they seek to improve their destructive capability.

At a time when resources and funds are swallowed up in a race towards annihilation, the world is undergoing an acute economic and social crisis. Problems and difficulties multiply in the development efforts of the third world. Obstacles and barriers pile up and cause the failure of efforts to establish a new international economic order based on justice and equality for all.

While it is difficult to assess the serious results of the arms-race policy, and particularly its economic and social effects and its effects upon the environment, we believe that its most serious effect is the possible outbreak of wars and deterrent nuclear conflagrations that might lead to generalized nuclear war.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, has in his report in document A/32/88, indicated in detail the very serious results of the arms-race policy and the implications of the arms race for the developing countries, which suffer from a severe shortage of financial and human resources.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

Why, we ask, are the developing countries compelled to spend some of their resources to acquire weapons when they ought to be devoting all their resources to their own development plans and the elimination of backwardness. The reason is a sad truth the developing countries must face, namely, the continued policies of exploitation and domination of peoples and the use of force to ensure national security.

Despite a major evolution in the concepts governing international relations since the Second World War - proof of which is the fact that the United Nations is based on the idea of collective security, which basically presupposes disarmament - what actually happens throughout the world is the stockpiling and perfecting of weapons as a means of achieving international security.

During the last 32 years we have seen that weapons, whatever their number or capability, cannot forever guarantee national or collective security of a given country or group of countries. The accumulation of weapons and arsenals inevitably creates greater insecurity and tension and brings about deterioration in international relations because distrust is general. Because of their vast military capability and stockpiles of nuclear weapons, the great Powers are primarily responsible for this situation, which bears heavily on the smaller countries, whose sense of insecurity increases as they see international peace becoming increasingly fragile through the actions of the major military Powers in further developing their nuclear and other weapons.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

The total prohibition of nuclear tests would perhaps be the first step, which must of necessity be taken at the earliest possible moment, to prove that disarmament is beginning to start on the right course. This question leads us to the concept of disarmament itself. It is quite clear that what is now happening is an attempt to organize an arms build-up or, at best, to control the increase in the number of nuclear bombs, missiles and other weapons so as to calm and reassure people regarding the balance of terror among the great Powers.

Obviously, this approach will lead to no real progress. The required real progress can only be achieved when these attempts end and when the great Powers genuinely proceed to disarmament and the destruction of their stockpiles.

Here it is fitting to mention that the purpose of the arms build-up has now gone beyond the needs of national security. The arms build-up has spread to threatening the very existence of peoples and is used as a means of pressure by applying a policy of force to protect and maintain racist régimes even as those in South Africa and in the Middle East.

At a time when the militant African peoples are exposed to aggression by the racist régimes in southern Africa and Rhodesia, the Palestinian people, too, is a victim of the most ferocious, colonialist, racist domination which is based on a community of interest of racist, Zionist forces and of world imperialism, in particular American imperialism. The continued occupation of territories and of Zionist aggression in the Middle East are based on the false logic of military superiority.

Today, we are witnesses to nuclear blackmail. The fact that the United States continues to supply the Zionist entity with sophisticated weaponry and provides it with economic and technical assistance, while the Zionist entity in occupied Palestine defies United Nations resolutions as well as world public opinion, will only cause further aggression and expansion, which of course goes hand in hand with increased tension in the region, and the arms race will thus enable the Zionist entity to continue to defy the United Nations and its resolutions.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

The position taken by the Zionist entity in regard to questions submitted to this Committee clearly and undeniably proves the aggressive character of that entity because the Zionist entity in its aggression against Arab countries has constantly made use of forbidden incendiary weapons. The use of such weapons by the Zionist entity has spread to include among its targets civilian populations and establishments, including even hospitals. Furthermore, the Zionist entity refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, or to implement General Assembly resolutions intended to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Although the General Assembly has reaffirmed its resolutions on these questions repeatedly, the Zionist entity has not changed its stand and continues to flout those resolutions, thus proving its aggressive intentions.

The delegation of Iraq attaches great importance to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the more so since the Zionist entity is pursuing its nuclear arms build-up and uses every means to this end. We are not prepared to forget the announcement of the theft of a quantity of plutonium by Israel. Even the friends of Israel are bound to observe the development of nuclear weaponry in occupied Palestine.

The United Nations has adopted clear-cut resolutions on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. All countries of the region, with the exception of Israel, have accepted this. In fact, the Zionist entity continues to defy the will of the international community. We believe that all countries, and in particular the great Powers, must give every possible effective assistance and support to efforts to implement the resolution on establishing a nuclear-free-weapon zone in the Middle East, because it is illogical to allow Zionist refusal to prevent this Organization from implementing its resolutions.

Nuclear blackmail, which has recently been introduced in the region by the Zionist entity, creates a very dangerous situation which deserves our full attention. War broke out in the Middle East several times during the course of a single generation.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

The Zionists in their continued acts of aggression have employed all kinds of forbidden weapons. To date the situation in the Middle East is still characterized by tension, and it is deteriorating further. The possibility of an explosion because of the Zionist policies of aggression remains very strong.

As has been pointed out, this is one of the most serious questions which the international community faces, particularly after the introduction of a new element in the conflict between Arabs and Zionists - that is to say, the nuclear weaponry of the Zionist entity. All the foregoing indicates that either the United Nations must urgently adopt effective measures to change the situation or we shall continue to witness a deteriorating situation.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

On our agenda we have a very important item, namely, a special General Assembly session devoted to disarmament. The failure so far of all disarmament efforts is the reason for convening the special session, so that we might make a renewed effort to resolve the disarmament question. Argentina's representative, Mr. Ortiz de Rozas, has presented the report of the Preparatory Committee in a thorough and complete manner and has earned our admiration. That report should be studied in detail.

My delegation has from the outset supported the appeal of the non-aligned countries, following the Non-Aligned Summit Conference at Colombo, for this special session to be held. My delegation participated in the work of the Preparatory Committee and we are pleased with the results reached.

The Iraqi delegation considers that, in the present state of the disarmament problem, the convening of this session has become a necessity and deserves our full attention. My delegation therefore hopes that the Preparatory Committee meetings to be held next year will complete the work that remains so as to enable us to arrive at results that will guarantee genuine progress in this field, and thus make up for the many delays we have experienced in our present attempts to solve the question of disarmament.

My delegation also supports the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Indian Ocean. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, of which we are a member, has undertaken contacts this year aimed at implementing the General Assembly resolution. The results obtained so far, however, are very limited, not to say discouraging. That is essentially due to the fact that most of the major Powers have not co-operated with the Ad Hoc Committee. The result has been a failure to implement the Declaration on the Indian Ocean or to achieve its objectives.

The repeated arguments adduced by these countries regarding guarantees of freedom of navigation are hardly convincing, particularly in view of the fact that the Declaration on establishing a nuclear-free zone in the Indian Ocean is clear-cut and unambiguous. My delegation has emphasized that keeping military bases in the Indian Ocean, and the ensuing escalation of military rivalry, are the major obstacles preventing the implementation of the Declaration on the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

The failure of the efforts made so far has resulted in the proposal made by Madagascar to convene a conference attended by the coastal States and other States in the region. The Iraqi delegation has supported that idea and we hope that that conference will take place and bring about an agreement that will create the conditions necessary for implementation of the Declaration on the Indian Ocean.

I should like to endorse the suggestion made by the representatives of the developing countries who have emphasized that nuclear energy should be used for economic and social development.

Mr. D'ALMEIDA (Togo) (interpretation from French): As I am speaking for the first time in this Committee, may I, first of all, on behalf of my delegation, warmly congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to extend similar congratulations to the other offices of the Committee. I take particular pleasure in seeing this important office held by the representative of Ghana, a fraternal and friendly country.

The question of disarmament continues to be one of the central topics of discussion in the First Committee. The first conclusion we can draw from the debate is that the international community, by a great majority, has recognized the dramatic need to face up to the danger of the arms race. This incipient awareness must be hastened and strengthened by all possible means.

The arms race remains one of the most alarming phenomena in international relations. It represents a source of mistrust and tension among States. It is an obstacle to the peace and progress of peoples. It is with anxiety, if not anguish, that mankind has embarked on the last quarter of this century, one which has already suffered two world wars. Another world war, as every one knows, is likely to end in the destruction of mankind by nuclear weapons.

(Mr. D'Almeida, Togo)

Today the world is living not only by the law of the jungle but also in a balance of terror, at the mercy of an incident or a nuclear accident. The arms race and the elimination of the danger of nuclear conflict are the challenges of today. Unfortunately, we have a definite feeling of frustration at the lack of progress in the field of disarmament. It is virtually impossible to remain optimistic. The hazards of the arms race are continuously compounded by a dangerous proliferation of weapons, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The nuclear arms race is an affront to the honour and the conscience of peoples. It is also an absurdity, considering that it has led to an accumulation of weapons whose destructive power is enough to destroy all life on our planet several times over.

We believe that general and complete disarmament under international control remains the objective to which all disarmament efforts should be directed. The most urgent task is the general and complete cessation of nuclear-weapons tests and the prevention of the spread of such weapons. We deplore the continued manufacture of ever-more deadly and sophisticated weapons while efforts are under way to reduce those that already exist.

The arms race not only represents a grave threat to mankind; it is also a waste of precious energies and resources which, rather than being squandered on the improvement of engines of death and destruction, should be devoted to meeting the most basic and most essential needs of man. The arms race is just as deadly for world economic relations because of the financial and human resources it absorbs. Our first task is to counter this state of affairs and to imbue others with our determination to bring about an effective and controlled general disarmament as soon as possible.

Disarmament is not only dependent on a panoply of technical arrangements; it presupposes, and is at the same time a corollary, of the new approach in international relations: the willingness of all countries to settle disputes through arbitration and negotiation and the commitment to conduct international relations in observance of the principles proclaimed in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. D'Almeida, Togo)

My delegation considers furthermore that it is urgently necessary for the General Assembly to give particular attention to what is going on in our continent for it is imperative that Africa should become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We are concerned at current developments in the international situation which favour the spread of such nuclear weapons to new geographical regions.

What is happening in South Africa is particularly alarming. We demand stricter control of nuclear exports for peaceful purposes to prevent their use for military purposes. It goes without saying that the States furnishing nuclear materials, equipment and technology have a special responsibility in this regard.

In my delegation's view the nuclear countries should discharge their obligation to work together for the implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolutions in the field of disarmament. While we welcome the bilateral measures towards disarmament we believe that these efforts should increasingly be channelled through the United Nations. Disarmament is not just the business of those with the greatest destructive capability.

We believe that high priority should be given in United Nations forums to all aspects of disarmament. We have taken some small comfort from hearing the two super-Powers here and there explicitly and solemnly indicate their intention of intensifying their efforts and we hope that in the coming year we shall witness more tangible progress in the field of disarmament. It is no doubt a difficult but by no means impossible task.

My delegation favours the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to problems of disarmament as was requested at Colombo by the non-aligned countries. We believe that the special session could be an appropriate forum for considering all disarmament questions and for determining ways and means of resolving them. My delegation hopes that at the forthcoming special session a practical and conscientious disarmament effort will be made in a deeply realistic and responsible spirit for there is already disarray in the ranks of those who expect more from life than mere stocktaking.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.